A RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

REPORT OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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I INTRODUCTION

Prince Edward Island is a rural province. It is, in fact, Canada's most rural province and at the same time the most densely populated. Sixty-two percent of Islanders (some 78,355 people) live outside the main urban centres of the province. With an average of 58 people per square mile, we are by far the most densely populated province in the country. For this reason, ensuring that the social, economic and cultural opportunities for rural Islanders are realized in a fair and equitable manner, requires more than simply an "ad hoc" approach. It requires a deliberate effort to marshal resources in support of rural community. This then, was the reason for the establishment of the Rural Development Board, a sub-committee of Cabinet, charged with bringing greater attention to the needs and opportunities of rural Prince Edward Island. A prominent objective of the Rural Development Board is the preparation of a Rural Development Strategy for the province.

Why a strategy? Rural Islanders have always been strategists. Whether it's a farmer deciding to purchase a new piece of equipment or a community deciding to build a new rink, we all engage in strategic thinking. In its simplest form a strategy is a matter of knowing where you are, deciding where you want to be, and determining the best way of getting there. A strategy needs to be flexible and suited for adjustment and

revision as conditions change and the process evolves. A plan by comparison, tends to be very rigid and inflexible once developed. In today's rapidly evolving and constantly changing world, the adaptability of a strategy to suit changing conditions is an attractive characteristic. But, a strategy for community development -- like any strategy -- is a long term proposition. There are no quick fixes. A strategy can not be an imposed solution nor can it be a grand design, intended to immediately solve all problems. It is a long range approach, built around a partnership of interest -- government and community, working hand in hand.

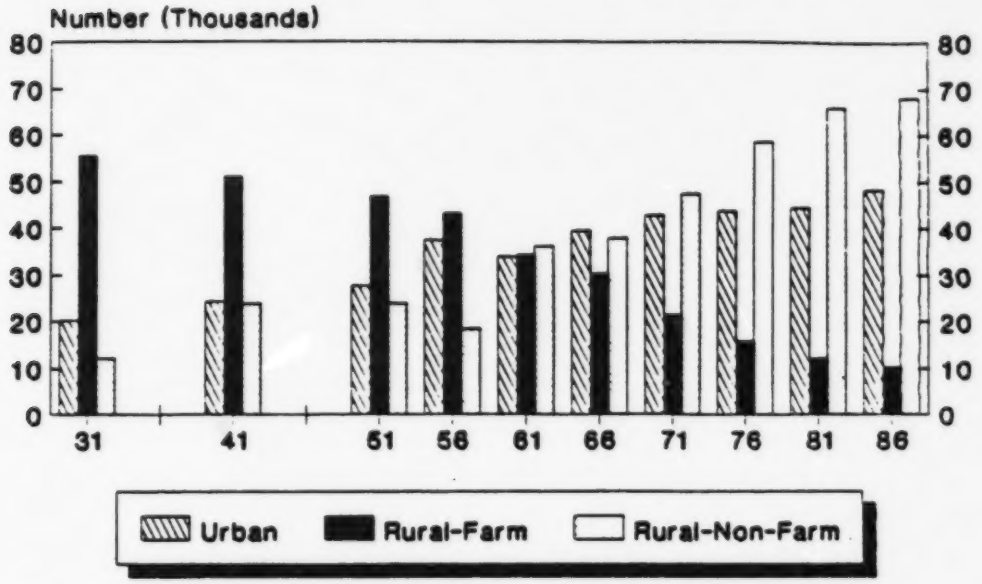
This Rural Development Strategy for Prince Edward Island is constructed around a series of questions: Where and what is rural P.E.I. now? Where will we go without any intervention? What kind of rural P.E.I. do we want? How do we get there? Answering these questions as completely as possible will lead to a strategy for the kind of rural communities we want. In searching for answers to these questions the Rural Development Board used a wide variety of sources and references. The extensive literature on community development was consulted. Similar strategies in other jurisdictions were examined for ideas that may be transferred or adapted to P.E.I. Previous efforts at community development were critically examined so that we might learn from the experience. But the most important information came from the rural residents of Prince Edward Island themselves,

through the many briefs presented at the various public hearings held by the Board across the province in the fall of 1989. Some 69 community organizations and individuals appeared with comments and recommendations on the kind of rural P.E.I. they would like to see. Both the spirit and substance of these submissions is reflected in the Rural Development Strategy. The voice of rural Prince Edward Island has been heard strongly and clearly.

The urban-rural distinction in Prince Edward Island is unclear. Statistics Canada offers a simple demographic definition of what constitutes rural community. However, in the Prince Edward Island context, such a definition is not precise, and may actually mask the more subtle characteristics and inter-relationships of rural living. There are time-honoured and distinctive values which are associated with rural community. These values, like sense of place, of belonging and familiarity, are much more important than population statistics when it comes to defining what is rural and what is urban. When the vast majority of rural residents were farmers, the distinction was simpler. If you were a farmer or part of a farm family, then by definition you were part of a rural community. However, the rural farm population has declined steadily since 1931 and markedly since 1961. As Table 1 (following) indicates, non-farm rural population is the largest single sector of the Island population, accounting for 53.5% of the total, compared to 38% urban and only 8.5% rural farm population.

TABLE 1

URBAN, RURAL-FARM AND RURAL NON-FARM POPULATION, 1931-1986



Source: Statistics Canada catalogues 11-516, 92-536, 92-606, 92-807, 92-901 and 94-129

It is a safe assumption that the majority of the rural non-farm population is commuting some distance from the home community to find work. Superimposed on this, the majority of the 2800 farms in the province are part-time operations, with one or more of the family members subsidizing the farm by working off-farm for all or a part of the year. Within a 15 mile radius of Charlottetown and Summerside, the off-farm work is most often found in the urban centre. The influence of the urban centres on the rural communities within this radius is having a hybridizing effect or could be viewed as "rurbanizing" small rural

communities. Rural community needs in the outlying regions of the province may well be very different than those of the "rurban" radius. For example, of the six locations where briefs were presented to the Rural Development Board, the need for education and training ranked at or near the top in five of the six locations. Only in the East Prince-Central Queens rurban area, closer to the main education centres, did it rank as a low priority.

Not only is it difficult to define community in demographic terms, it is also difficult to define in geographic terms. What are the boundaries of rural community? Most rural Islanders still identify their community with the former small school district, more than twenty years after the disappearance of the one-room school. The distance children could be expected to walk to school, as well as religious and ethnic commonalities, tended to form the boundaries of rural community in Prince Edward Island. The persistence of these boundaries is testimony to the importance which Islanders place in local community and local institutions. As Smitheram points out in **The Garden Transformed**: *"Along with the church and general store, the school became an institution central to the Islander's concept of community."* As persistent as the school district concept of community is, much has changed in the past two decades. Increased ease of transportation, school and church consolidation, and the centralization of employment all affect a broadened concept of

community. For example, the person who considers him/herself a member of the South Granville community, may upon reflection be part of the Breadalbane Post Office community, the Hunter River school, commercial and medical service community, the New Glasgow Fire Department community, and the Charlottetown employment community! Alex Sim in **Land and Community** writes, "..., *the rural community everywhere has so changed that the words rural and community are thought by some to have become anachronistic if not irrelevant. Yet the place, despite the changes that are occurring, is not just an extension of the city. There are, it is true, economic ties... but in the rural community there is a bustling social life in the churches, in recreation clubs and in sports centres... I choose to call it a new way of rural community life.*"

Rural community on Prince Edward Island is a changed but still complex web. This web is flexible, overlapping, and at varying times expanding or contracting, depending on the particular issue or concern. All of this makes tailoring a Rural Development Strategy more difficult, but trying to simplify such a complex social milieu would do a disservice to communities, and the social and economic interrelationships that have evolved through time. Our strategies, therefore, must of necessity respect the intricacy that has been woven into rural society by the generations before us. They must also respect our cultural

heritage. The challenge, then, is to preserve and build upon established values while meeting the developmental needs and desires of rural Islanders.

II WHAT WILL A STRATEGY DO FOR ISLAND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The main function of the Rural Development Strategy will be to provide the tools to build a **willed** future for rural Prince Edward Island. Without a willed future, the Island countryside will certainly be more exposed to unordered development and exploitation. With that willed future, on the other hand, the people of Prince Edward Island can develop the kind of rural social, economic and ecological environment they find attractive.

Achieving that future will require change in the direction of public policy in the province, and for this reason it is expected that the Rural Development Strategy will have a major effect on internal government operations both in terms of policy formulation and program implementation. It will become a principal working document for the Rural Development Board reporting to Executive Council. The Board will use the Strategy as a gauge to consider the degree to which all government programs and policies enhance and encourage rural social, cultural and economic development. In effect, the Rural

Development Strategy will serve as a statement of how government views rural Prince Edward Island in general, and rural social and economic development in particular.

In a very practical sense, the Rural Development Strategy outlines a governmental process to be used to achieve objectives and goals. It explains how government will maintain rural development as a priority issue and more specifically, it defines in detail the responsibility that a new Department of Community Development will have as the lead agency of government for rural social and economic development.

To be effective, a strategy such as this must also meet the needs of the local community. In this regard, the Rural Development Strategy will act as a guide for communities to cultivate a self-determinative role that is essential to effective social and economic development. For any rural improvement to take place, it must be tailored to the needs and desires of the local community. A vital function of this strategy is to lay out a process and a system that will allow rural communities to establish working relationships with government, enabling them to achieve community goals.

The principal effect of a Rural Development Strategy will be to establish what kind of a rural P.E.I. we want and then to encourage the coordination of government, community and business interests to achieve that desired rural community.

III WHERE ARE WE NOW

To improve the rural community condition in P.E.I., it is necessary not only to understand where we are and how we got here, but to also appreciate where we may be going if we do not make efforts to shape and control our future.

There is a well established and widely accepted view of Prince Edward Island as "The Million Acre Farm", a veritable "Garden of Eden" -- a rolling and picturesque countryside dotted with small farms and quaint rural communities. While it is always dangerous to critically question such a cherished view of our province, it nonetheless must be challenged, particularly in light of the tremendous social and economic changes which have transformed the province in the past three decades.

These changes are most clearly chronicled in the statistical profile of the province. In fact, the demographic picture of Prince Edward Island would suggest that this prosaic view may

have had some measure of accuracy as late as the 1950's, but it no longer provides a realistic or reliable picture of community in the province.

Using Statistics Canada's definition of urban as "a continuously built-up area of 1000 or more and a population density of 400 or more per square kilometer", the percentage of P.E.I.'s population living in urban areas increased from 28% to 38% between 1951 and 1986.

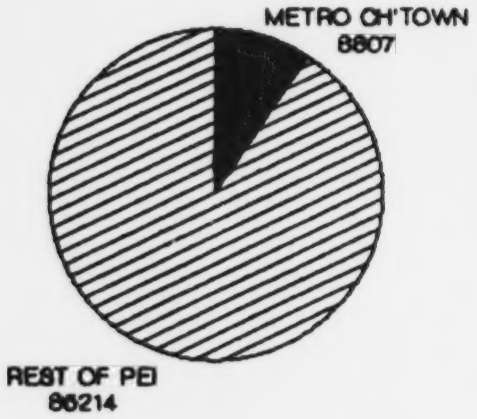
As useful as this may be, such a measurement approach may seriously underestimate the change from a rural to an urban culture. For example, the definition does not take into account individuals who live just outside the census boundaries but whose lives are inextricably tied to the larger metropolitan areas. Many who live outside the census boundaries of the Charlottetown or Summerside regions work in the urban centres. It has been estimated that over 10,000 people commute on a daily basis into Charlottetown for work. Many commuters utilize the urban recreational facilities and shop in the urban stores. These are the "rurbanized" Islanders referred to earlier. While Statistics Canada estimated the urban population of P.E.I. at about 48,000 in 1986, in truth, more than 88,000 lived within a 15 mile radius of Charlottetown and Summerside.

This trend to "rurbanize" has been underway for at least two decades. Over this period, the Charlottetown and Summerside areas have experienced the lion's share of all population growth on Prince Edward Island. They have actually accounted for most of the population growth since 1931, but it took a combination of economic and social changes (discussed later) to make "rurbanization" a dominant demographic force. Table 2 compares population growth for Metro Charlottetown and the rest of the province between 1911 and 1986 and projects populations for the year 2001. Table 3 indicates the comparable population growth for the major regions in the province to 1986 and projects populations for the year 2001. These graphs indicate that the two metro areas have accounted for almost all population increases since 1911 and that the more rural areas of the province have had stagnant or declining populations during the same period. The graphs also indicate the increasingly dominant population position of Charlottetown.

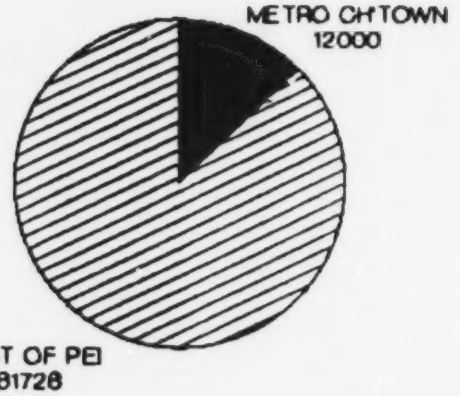
More importantly perhaps, the data indicate that the growth of the Greater Charlottetown region has taken place at the expense of the rest of the province. The data suggests that the Greater Charlottetown area benefits both from in-migration from Kings and Prince Counties, as well as in-migration from the other

TABLE 2

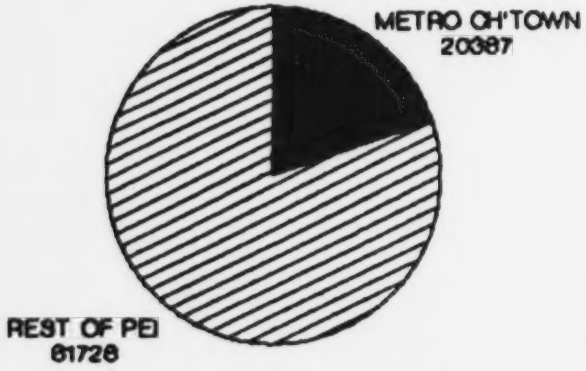
METRO CH'TOWN/PEI POPULATION - 1871



METRO CH'TOWN/PEI POPULATION - 1911



METRO CH'TOWN/PEI POPULATION - 1951



METRO CH'TOWN/PEI POPULATION - 2001

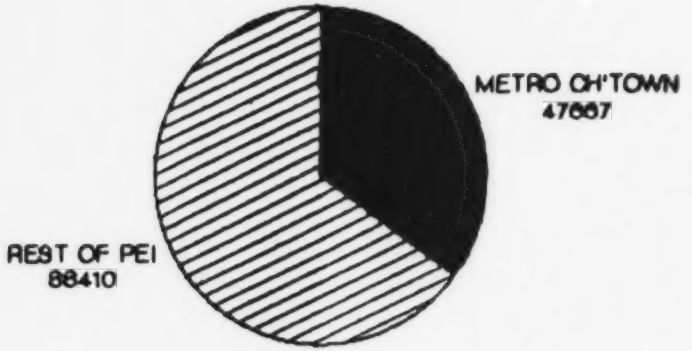
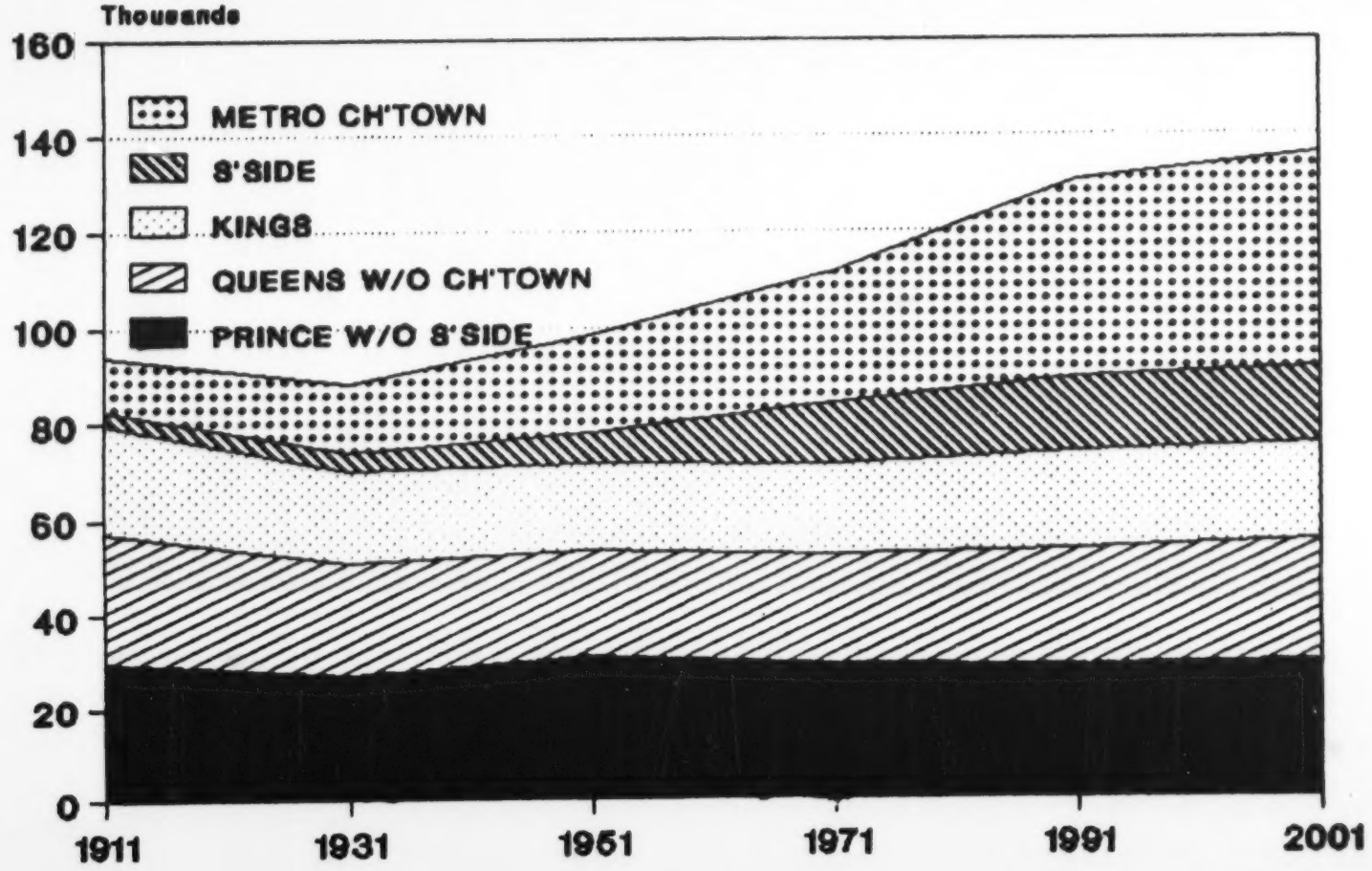


TABLE 3

POPULATION CHANGE ON PEI BY REGION
1911-2001



provinces and countries. In a 1971-1976 income tax study, the Government of Canada found that of individuals moving **within** P.E.I., 89% of those leaving Prince County and 83% of those leaving Kings County moved to Queens County.

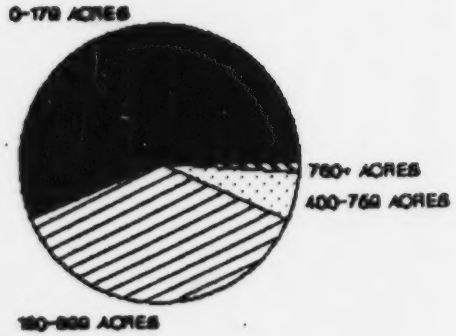
In a demographic sense at least, the picture of Prince Edward Island as a province of scattered rural settlements and small towns is no longer a reflection of reality. If one considers the 58,000 residents of the Charlottetown region and the 30,000 residents of the Summerside region, and then include the remaining towns of more than 1000 residents, almost 100,000 of the 130,000 Islanders live in an urban or semi-urban environment. At least from a population density perspective, the province is neither predominantly rural nor small town.

The notion of a rural P.E.I. comprised of small family farms is also suspect. In the last quarter century (1961-1986), the number of farms in the province declined from 7,300 to less than 2,800. During this same time, farm population declined from 35,000 to only 10,000.

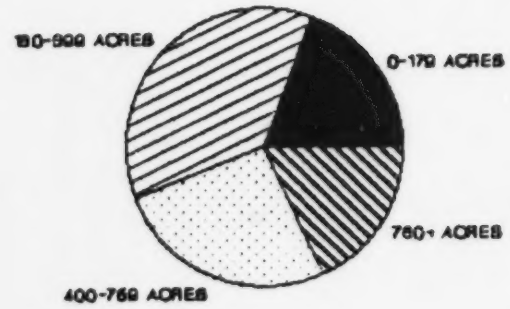
Accompanying the decline in the number of farms has been an increase in the average size of farms. Table 4 details the growing importance of larger farms in terms of the total land area under cultivation in P.E.I. In 1961, farms of less than 179 acres accounted for over half of the farm land in the province;

TABLE 4

PROPORTION OF FARM LAND BY FARM SIZE
1961



PROPORTION OF FARM LAND BY FARM SIZE
1986



by 1986 these smaller farms accounted for less than one quarter of the farm land. At the same time, the number of larger farms increased significantly, so that by 1986, farms of more than 400 acres accounted for almost 50 percent of the farmland in the province.

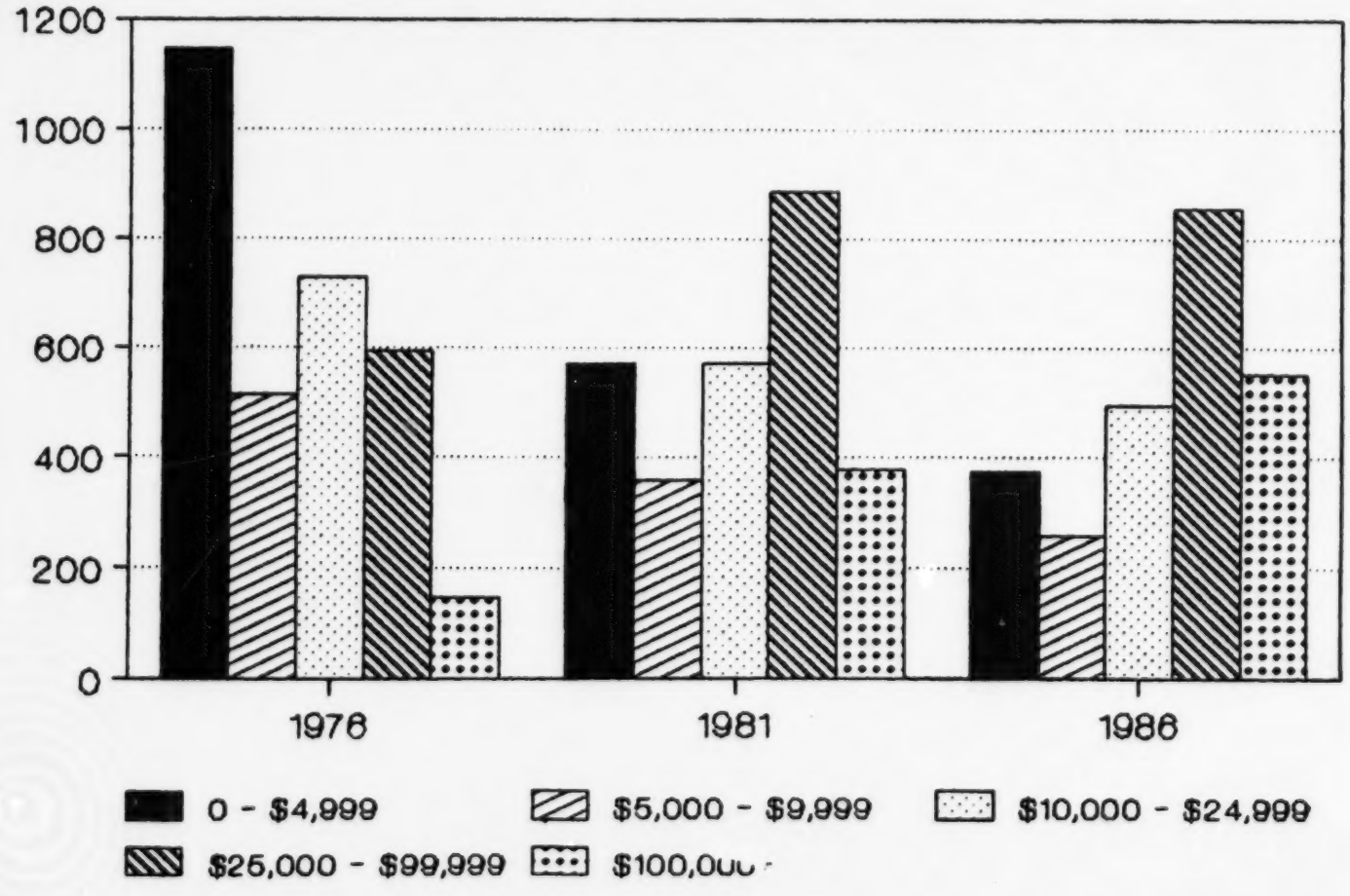
Agriculture shapes rural Prince Edward Island in its role as the dominant land use activity. However, fewer and fewer farmers with larger acreages are coming to dominate the landscape.

Another important change has occurred in the area of farm cash receipts. Table 5 indicates that the number of farms with gross annual receipts of less than $5,000 fell from 1100 in 1976 to fewer than 400 in 1986. At the same time, farms with gross annual receipts of more than $100,000 increased from about 150 in 1976 to about 400 in 1986. In other words, roughly 20% of Island farms now account for about 80% of gross farm sales.

As noted earlier, during these same years the farm population and the number of farms declined dramatically. That decline is even more dramatic when one considers that 2200 farms rely on off-farm work for additional income, leaving only 600 full-time farm operations in the province.

TABLE 5

FARMS CLASSIFIED BY SALES SIZE

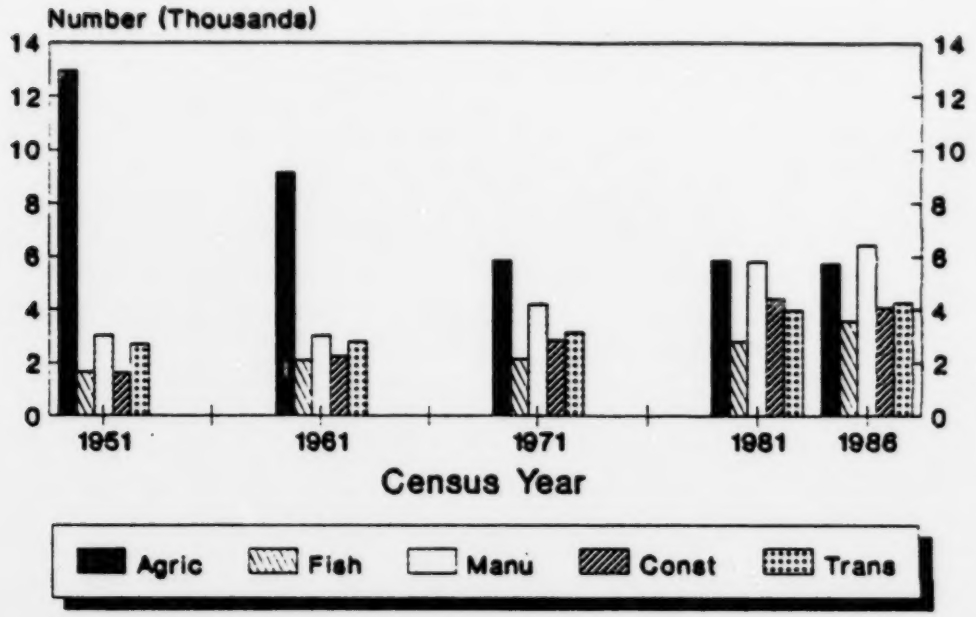


Other major social and economic changes make it clear that traditional notions of rural Prince Edward Island no longer apply. The consolidation of schools has dramatically improved school facilities and curriculum in the province, but also has undermined the sense of community in many parts of the Island. Similarly, improvements to our transportation system have substantially increased mobility, providing greater access to rural areas, but by the same token, also have provided rural residents with greater access to the urban centres. There is little doubt that road improvements and greater mobility generally have contributed greatly to the decline of small rural stores and other traditional local businesses. Many rural women have entered the labour force and they often work in urban areas. The changing role of the church and the decline of the extended family have also significantly reduced the cohesiveness of the rural fabric.

Major changes in the province's industrial structure have also affected rural areas. Tables 6 and 7 detail the significant changes in the Island labour force between 1951 and 1986. These data indicate that the goods industries, which include the primary industries (long considered "the backbone of the P.E.I rural economy") have achieved only marginal growth since the 1950's, while the service industries, which are concentrated in the urban centres, have achieved dramatic growth during the same

Table 6

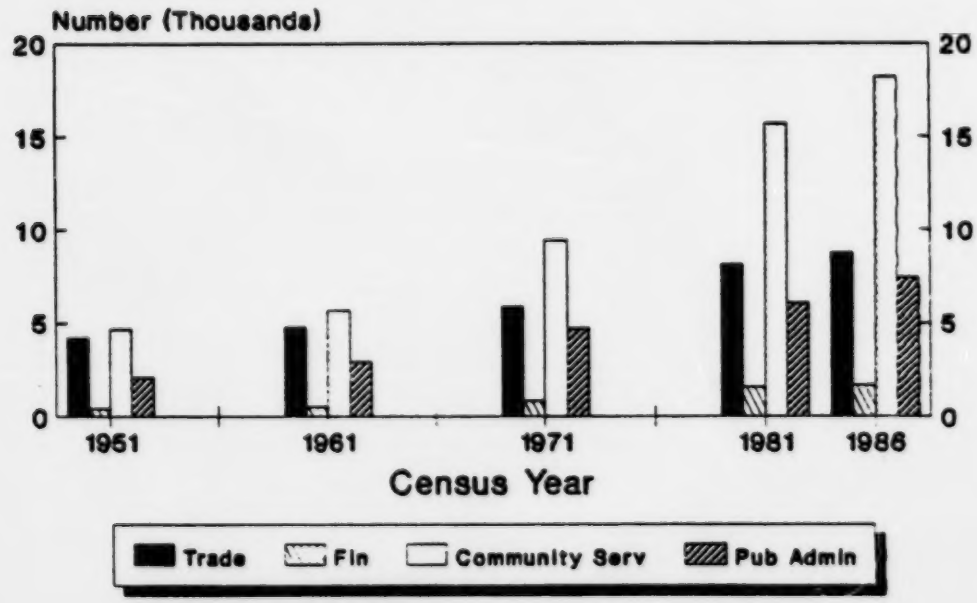
LABOUR FORCE BY GOODS INDUSTRY
for Selected Years, 1951 - 1986



Source: Statistics Canada Catalogue 93-152

Table 7

LABOUR FORCE BY SERVICE INDUSTRY
for Selected Years, 1951 - 1986



Source: Statistics Canada Catalogue 93-152

period. The decline of job opportunities in the rural areas and the increasing job opportunities in urban areas acts as a powerful urbanizing force in Prince Edward Island.

If current labour force trends continue, Queens County stands to gain the most and Kings County to gain the least. Table 8 details the composition of the county labour force in 1986 by goods and service industry. As can be seen, Queens County has the greatest proportion of high growth industries and Kings County has the greatest proportion of low growth industries.

TABLE 8

LABOUR FORCE COMPOSITION BY COUNTY - 1986

COUNTY	GOODS INDUSTRIES (Low Growth)	SERVICE INDUSTRIES (High Growth)
Kings	60.5%	39.5%
Prince	43.3%	56.7%
Queens	31.9%	60.1%

The foregoing statistical analysis presents a rather bleak picture of rural Prince Edward Island. However, it is important to point out that in some impressive instances, rural communities are flourishing in the face of generally adverse trends. This is the result of initiative and co-operation at the local community

level, and the emergence of stronger provincial government policies in support of rural community development. It is the objective of the Rural Development Strategy to build on these successes.

The rural/urban situation on P.E.I. may be summarized as follows:

- **With the exception of a few isolated pockets, the three rurally dominated regions of West Prince, East Kings, and south Kings/East Queens have either remained stagnant or declined.**

- **Almost all of the population growth on P.E.I. since 1931 has taken place in the Charlottetown or Summerside regions. Since 1971, almost all population growth has taken place in the Charlottetown region.**

- **Life in the rural areas has changed so substantially that it is possible to argue that many rural residents lead almost completely urban lives. This is especially true of "rurban" areas located close to the larger centres and this has important ramifications for the nature of community in these areas.**

- **The combination of social and economic forces which have affected rural life will continue to do so into the future.**

- **There is evidence of a growing will to achieve development in the major rural service towns (such as Souris, O'Leary, Montague, Alberton, Kensington and Tignish), and a firm desire on the part of rural Islanders to improve their social and economic well-being.**

IV WHAT TYPE OF RURAL P.E.I. CAN WE EXPECT IN THE FUTURE

Without intervention, Prince Edward Island undoubtedly will see continued decline or lack of growth in the rural areas across the province. The P.E.I. Department of Finance has developed population projections for Kings, Queens, Prince Counties, the Charlottetown Region and for the entire Province for each year through 2001. Tables 2 and 3 detail these preliminary estimates. The Department estimates that provincial population growth will increase steadily over the next 10 years from the current 130,000 to over 136,000. It estimates that Kings County's population will remain stable, while Prince County's will increase by about 1500, and Queens County's population will increase by about 3900.

Projecting these figures into the future, the Charlottetown Region will come to dominate the province in terms of population, economic influence and possibly political representation. By 2001 the Charlcttetown Region will account for almost half of the provincial population, and the Charlottetown and Summerside Regions will account for almost three quarters of this population. Although the rural population may remain stable, rural areas will decline in importance since they will represent a relatively smaller percentage of the total population.

Agricultural output will be dominated by a small number of large farms. Other farms, by necessity, will rely more heavily on off-farm income, or non-traditional on-farm income (e.g. summer cottages, bed and breakfast, silviculture, value-added cottage industry)

In Canada's smallest province the concentration of population around one or two urban areas will present a very real political problem. As an increasingly large percentage of the province's citizens live in or very near Charlottetown and/or Summerside, and if fair and equitable representation by population is to be maintained, then the province will begin to closely approximate a city state! The question may then be posed: How will such a city and suburbs of perhaps 150,000 persons living within essentially a fifteen mile radius be

governed? In all probability, continued urban growth, even if rural populations remain static, will mean increased pressure for electoral reform on Prince Edward Island over the coming decades.

Though it is difficult to measure, rural areas may then face an even greater jeopardy. As the Charlottetown Region achieves a dominant position, it will reach a critical mass, where almost all development will logically take place in that area due to the size of the market and economies of scale. At that point, the rate of rural decline will escalate and it will be almost impossible to encourage development outside the Charlottetown Region.

Under such a scenario the rural areas of P.E.I. will face two major threats:

- **Rural areas located some distance from major urban centres will face serious population decline, continued job loss and the viability of many of the communities in these areas will be threatened.**

- **More rural areas located close to major urban areas will become "bedroom suburbs" for those centres. This increased "rurbanization" of rural areas will have lasting repercussions on life in these areas.**

V WHAT KIND OF RURAL PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND DO WE WANT

As has been pointed out in the previous section, a rural Prince Edward Island with no strategic intervention will develop along certain trends. Principally: population, industry, infrastructure and facilities will continue to shift to the Greater Charlottetown and Summerside areas. Other areas of the province will slowly lose population and with a few exceptions, will lose services as their economic viability diminishes. The number of farms will decrease in outlying areas, and with the exception of a few centres, services and supplies for the remaining large specialized farms will be provided by Charlottetown and/or Summerside. Families remaining in rural areas will for the most part commute. Presently, 60% of the population of P.E.I. lives on 5% of the land. A non-interventionist future will see that ratio widen even further.

For historical, cultural, political, economic, and social reasons, this is not the kind of rural Prince Edward Island we want! That was abundantly evident in the briefs presented to the Rural Development Board. But it is not enough to say what it is we do not want. There also must be a vision of what rural Prince Edward Island should become. Whether or not this vision is

totally realized is not important, for reality will likely lie somewhere between what we ideally want and what is practically possible. What is important, however, is that a vision be pursued.

The kind of Island rural community desired is in sharp contrast to the centralization that has been taking place in North America since the 1930's. However, to give up and submit to this process is to abandon our vision and possibly jeopardize our very provincehood. It is important to acknowledge that we are "swimming against the tide" and it will take a commitment and redirection of resources to make an impact on the forces pushing in the opposite direction.

An important objective of the Rural Development Strategy is to sustain our rural communities across the province by helping to bring about a more equitable distribution of opportunity and growth. While it is both impractical and undesirable to ordain where communities should exist, it is nevertheless an aim of the Strategy to encourage a decentralized society by using the powers of government to help provide attractive facilities and the essential infrastructure in rural areas.

In many ways, Prince Edward Island already possesses what George Brinkman has termed a "micropolitan" character. The

micropolitan approach to rural development, first advanced by Brinkman and later introduced in Saskatchewan, has much in its favour.

With this approach, social and economic functions are specialized in different communities, with neighbouring communities combining functions to form a sophisticated rural network of economic and social activities. This form of economic interdependence is contrary to the traditional development concept of "Central Place Theory" which was the basic thinking of the Prince Edward Island Comprehensive Development Plan in the 1970's.

Despite the centralizing policies of the Development Plan, Prince Edward Island still retains many examples of this micropolitan approach to business and service delivery. It is not unusual, for example, to have within one regional area the consolidated school in one rural community, the Regional Services Centre in another, a major farm equipment supply and repair business in yet another, and a recreational complex in a fourth community. Superimposed on this pattern might be an overlay of country stores, garages, machine shops, volunteer fire halls, and fish processing plants. The extensive road network on Prince Edward Island and the small distances between communities favours this type of development.

Even though rural Prince Edward Island, like the rest of Atlantic Canada, has a relatively diversified local economy compared to other jurisdictions, it is still largely dependent upon agriculture (primarily potatoes)and the fishery (primarily lobster). Both of these industries, of course, are rural based and both are relatively mature and static with regard to workforce and output. In the instance of agriculture, there has actually been a net loss of jobs since 1971, and as mechanization and technology continue to change the industry, this trend is likely to continue. In terms of job creation and rural development opportunities, then, neither fisheries nor agriculture has a large potential. But that is not to say that they are not essential elements in a rural development effort.

Keeping agriculture and the fishery in a strong and active condition is critical to a diversified local economy. In particular, emphasis needs to be placed on building secondary industries through the adding of value to our primary products. As Galston (1988) points out, *"Any promise for rural economic revitalization must lie in increased value-added industries with a competitive advantage"*.

It is also important from a rural development point of view, to recognize how the structure of agriculture on Prince Edward Island is changing. In the 1960's and 1970's a major policy

effort was made to have all farms become specialized, full-time family operations. A certain segment of the industry did respond to these policies, giving rise to more large scale corporate farming. However, for a variety of reasons the majority of farms on Prince Edward Island can best be defined as multipurpose economic units. Most Island farms (in excess of 75%) now have sources of income other than primary production. The farmer who drives the school bus, or operates a bed and breakfast, sells garden equipment, or runs a roadside vegetable stand, is not uncommon on P.E.I. Less traditional sources of both on and off-farm income are also becoming more common, as our farmers venture into small scale specialty processing and other activities. It can be said that a symbiotic relationship now exists wherein the availability of other sources of income are increasingly important in maintaining the agricultural base. This should be viewed as an important phenomenon which needs support and encouragement.

Maintaining active primary industries while developing value added secondary industries and building high value service industries in rural P.E.I. is in keeping with the recommendations

of the Economic Council of Canada report, **Good Jobs - Bad Jobs**, *"Successful development strategies will have to maintain strong resource and manufacturing industries and foster a high quality and innovative service sector."*

The Rural Development Strategy will give preference to the establishment of small specialized manufacturing units as a means of encouraging a broader distribution of industry-generated wealth in and amongst local communities. However, in some instances larger specialized plants will be necessary when economies of scale are essential to product development.

The rationale for any rural economic development is to result in a more captivating rural community in the broadest sense of the word, a community in which people want to live and establish a permanent base. Thus, economic development is a means to an end, not an end in itself. With this in mind, it is important that all development, and particularly tourism development, respect the integrity of community culture and heritage.

It is also important to recognize and use to advantage the important informal or social economy that is so much a part of rural Island life. The informal economy in many cases is the "cement" allowing families to maintain an adequate and comfortable lifestyle with an income that many other locales

would consider far below the poverty line. The Institute of Island Studies pointed out in their submission to the Rural Development Board, *"Through a combination of traditional coping strategies and the operation of the local informal economy, many rural Islanders contrive to convert a modest family income into a superior quality of life."* The informal economy is where social and economic activities intermingle to create a lifestyle. It is, and will remain, an important part of rural life in Prince Edward Island.

Economic development in rural P.E.I. will be dependent on three sectors: private entrepreneurship, community initiated enterprise, and government. They will act independently at times and with their own motives and interests, but increasingly as we develop our role in a more global economy, new and unique partnerships and interrelationships between the three sectors will evolve. The Evangeline Region is an example of such an interdependence.

The key to long term economic development is human resource development. Rural Prince Edward Islanders recognize and emphasize this. Education, training and retraining needs were the most often mentioned topic in the briefs presented to the Rural Development Board. Over 40% of submissions called for improved training. The Economic Council of Canada (1989)

supports the conclusion: *"To put it simply, Canadians should not expect to improve - or even maintain - their standard of living unless, as a nation, they attach a high priority to the quality of the work force. Human resource development must be a major priority for policy makers."* However, for the unique needs of rural P.E.I., the normally-accepted types of training will not result in the kind of rural P.E.I. that is desired. In 1982 Dasgupta pointed out, *"The Island traditionally has had a higher level of educational attainment than most predominantly rural societies, perhaps because of the need for Island youth to seek employment elsewhere."* We have been net exporters of education! What is needed is training that is community responsive as well as individually oriented. The brief by the West Prince Industrial Commission makes the point eloquently: *"All too often in rural P.E.I. advanced education is envisaged by young students as a means of getting out of the small stream and into the big stream. Children who wish to remain in the area are discouraged to further their education because of lack of opportunity in their area. The result is the situation whereby children do not realize their potential. Somehow society must change their train of thought. Children should be encouraged to further themselves as a means of being able to offer more to the community than as a means of getting out."* Such a statement is echoed by the Kinkora Area brief and many other submissions.

To achieve the kind of rural P.E.I. we want, training and opportunity must develop hand in hand. Training and skill development that fosters the kind of rural entrepreneurship that is needed is a step in that direction. There must be greater opportunities for formal, continuing, adult, advanced and remedial education. It is important that these opportunities be equitably available throughout the province to ensure a skilled competent workforce province wide.

A sensitivity to community needs and objectives combined with use of the most up-to-date training techniques and facilities will achieve the goal of a skilled community oriented workforce suited to the rural Island workplace of the twenty-first century.

All signs for future economic development point to a greatly increased need for information. Even from a secondary industry-manufacturing point of view, Hawken (1983), points out that far more information will be built into goods production in the future. The Economic Council of Canada (1990), states, *"Goods production is becoming more service like. Increasingly, job growth in the goods sector is in occupations which provide services such as administration, information collection and processing, research and development, marketing and clerical work."* It also points out that nearly 90% of the job growth in Canada since 1967 has taken place in the service sector. Since 1981 four of every five new jobs in Prince Edward Island have

been in the service sector. The East Prince Area Industrial commission explains that 85% of all new business start-ups in P.E.I. are in the service sector.

The challenge is to ensure that the high value service sector jobs are located as much as possible in the rural areas. In many instances these jobs are location neutral -- that is, they can be done as well in Tyne Valley as in Toronto if the proper infrastructure is in place. As the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (1987) points out with reference to Atlantic futures, *"Computers, particularly microcomputers, are now regarded as indispensable parts of business life...When linked to new developments in telecommunications, these computers create a new industry of specialized information assembly, manipulation and dissemination. This new industry is unique in that it can be located almost anywhere, as long as there is access to a modern telephone system. It could easily become a new cottage industry."* The Kinkora Area Business Commission recognized this opportunity in their brief to the Rural Development Board. The Eastern Kings Advisory Committee for Holland College Souris Centre also sees the opportunity since they have as an aim *"becoming a viable, fully equipped, computer training centre... to have the capability to train people in the technologies of today and tomorrow."*

Certainly, rural Islanders believe strongly in their local communities. They know the social attributes and strengths of rural life -- the sense of community identity and belonging, the sharing and neighbourliness. While rural Prince Edward Island is not without its blemishes and limitations, it is also a special society worth nurturing and developing through greater economic opportunity.

Dasgupta (1982) observed that *"Rural communities in Prince Edward Island appear to be strong and socially cohesive despite the loss of self-sufficiency and institutions such as the one-room school house...Their integration with the larger community is primarily functional and impersonal."* It is this strength that the rural areas must build and develop upon.

A foundation for rural life in Prince Edward Island will continue to be a deep appreciation of the history and heritage of communities. Heritage was a recurring theme in many of the submissions to the Rural Development Board. The Women's Institute, The Friends of the Alberton Museum, The Community Advisory Board of Evangeline, Le Conseil de la Cooperation de l'I.P.E., The Friends of Sir Andrew MacPhail were amongst the many groups who stressed the importance of heritage as a consideration in the kind of rural P.E.I. that is desired.

Strong rural communities are those with a high degree of self-reliance and a minimal dependence for maintenance and operations on outside interests. The kind of rural P.E.I. desired is one in which the proprietorship rests locally, not on the benevolence of outside sources. In this situation, government is seen as a source of fostering and assisting in initiation of activities, but not in maintaining development activities.

The environment is of concern to all Islanders, but rural residents in particular, perhaps because of their intimate daily association with it, view environmental protection with extra concern. Concern for the environment also rated high in the submissions to the Rural Development Board, with one in four briefs noting it as a major issue. The kind of rural Prince Edward Island we want has a central focus -- a clean, healthy, safe, and diverse landscape based upon sound conservation practices. The Prince Edward Island Conservation Strategy and the report of the Royal Commission on the Land will provide basic direction in the implementation of the Rural Development Strategy. For example, it may be that the micropolitan approach to rural settlement and development described earlier, while making good sense economically, has associated with it certain land use practices that are undesirable. The newly-mandated

Agricultural Development Corporation also will have a significant role to play in environmental, land management and rural development issues on Prince Edward Island.

A constant desire of rural Islanders is for equality of opportunity, not only amongst rural areas but also in comparison to the major urban areas of the province. This ongoing desire has always been a problem for rural development. Former Premier Alex B. Campbell has been quoted as pondering Islanders *"Jekyll and Hyde schizophrenic complex,"* on the one hand wanting the life of a *"quiet, rustic and rural community"*, while on the other desiring *"cars, paved roads, services, T.V. --- all the advantages of urban developed areas."*

Given the infrastructural improvements of the last quarter century, and the communication and information systems that are evolving, rural Islanders are now close to being able to selectively choose the "best of both worlds" and decide which supposedly urban qualities they want to combine with highly valued rural qualities to develop a chosen rural lifestyle.

VI A VISION OF RURAL PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

A vision is a necessary part of any strategic planning exercise. Since our aim is a willed future, our goal must be a vision of what the action plan is likely to produce. The Oxford

Concise Dictionary defines vision in the planning sense very well: *"imaginative insight, statesmanlike foresight, sagacity in planning."* We are not unique in presenting a vision of rural life, for almost everyone who undertakes rural development issues has done the same. Some examples are worthy of consideration:

Alex Sim, Land and Community, 1988

> The new rural community has the potential of blending the wealth of the outside world with the riches of a creative inner life built on caring relationships within the home and in a neighbourhood. No one is going to legislate such a place into existence. There is evidence it is evolving. Its realization will be hastened only when rural people themselves are conscious of what is possible... We will search for a harmonious balance between people and for an enduring marriage between land and community.

Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, Atlantic Canada Today, 1987

> Despite its economic disparities relative to other parts of Canada and North America, Atlantic Canada is regarded through the eyes of most people in the world as a privileged place to live. Its rich resource base continues to support a relatively diverse economy, and most people have a standard of living beyond the reach and aspirations of most

people. This is supplemented by a lifestyle that is itself a product of the natural attractions of the region and its heritage.

The richness of Atlantic Canada's past gives a good indication of the resourcefulness of its people, frequently in distressing circumstances. This has bred a depth of character which enables them to persevere, and a sense of community which is the envy of others. This is an integral part of the region's future.

Adler, from The Garden Transformed, 1982

Prince Edward Island has been defined and loved in terms of certain enduring qualities: a visually varied and uncrowded countryside made more productive by people who valued stability as much as change...Prince Edward Island could do worse than to approximate the pastoral image of a well-tended and unspoiled garden sustaining spirited communities and an independent way of life.

Institute of Island Studies, Brief to Rural Development Board,1990

> The Island should act to establish for itself an international reputation for clean air, water and soil. This will result in a premium for all our natural products, as well as for tourism. Policy makers should be well informed about the socioeconomic strengths of our communities; they should take care to build on these. In government programs for rural Prince Edward Island, the emphasis should be on local jobs for local areas and strengthening existing communities.

Our vision for rural Prince Edward Island is essentially a summary of the section, **The Kind of Rural Prince Edward Island We Want**, coupled with a careful consideration of the briefs submitted to the Rural Development Board.

The rural Prince Edward Island we envisage will have as a basis the social and cultural values that have evolved through time; a sense of community, a feeling of belonging, a tradition of self-reliance, social responsibility, sharing, neighbourliness and an appreciation of heritage and culture. In addition, there will develop a diversified economy consisting primarily of small

specialized manufacturing businesses depending in large part on adding value to the products of land, forest and sea, as well as a diverse service industry making full use of new technology and its adaptation to rural service development. Province-wide education and training opportunities will be available to ensure over time a literate, numerate, and well-trained population. Inclusive in the educational processes will be the appreciation of social and community responsibility that encourages rural residents to remain and use their faculties to further develop their communities. This willed sustainable future will be based upon a clean and healthy and safe environment which has as its foundation a deep appreciation of our most cherished natural resources -- land and water.

Such a vision of rural life will promote, and to a large measure assure a decentralized population for the province, with access to a wide range of opportunities and services available to most Canadians, coupled with the ability to enjoy a safe, full, healthy, and satisfying rural life.

VII HOW DO WE GET THERE: AN ACTION PLAN

A. INTRODUCTION

Rural Community Development is not an instantaneous process. It requires the steady building of trust and the establishment of a comfortable working relationship between all partners. This chapter of the Strategy defines the roles that both the community and government will play in the overall process, and it presents a set of four principles to guide rural development activities in the future.

In order to ensure that the activities of government as much as possible are consistent with the interests of rural Prince Edward Island, the Rural Development Board will initiate a special review of all government programs and policies to assess their relevance to rural social and economic development. Furthermore, government will establish a Department of Community Development to act as the lead agency in rural development. Government also will maintain its commitment to decentralize its activities and services in those program areas where such decentralization can be achieved without disruption to the level and quality of service.

Process is an important aspect of getting things done. This section of the Strategy outlines how government will respond to community initiatives with a new, more responsible and dynamic system. Finally, this section presents some examples of new program initiatives which encourage the rural development process.

B. ROLES AND PRINCIPLES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Effective rural development is based on a series of partnerships. Of primary importance is the partnership of government and community. Each has a role to play and it is vital that these roles be defined and well understood. A constant theme throughout the hearings the Rural Development Board held across the province was that in order to be successful, **rural development must be community based**. We agree. The Action Plan which follows is based on this belief, and on the understanding that each partner has a specific role:

1. Role of the Community

The role of the rural communities of Prince Edward Island will be to **initiate, operate** and **take responsibility** for rural development ideas and projects.

2. Role of the Government of Prince Edward Island

The role of government will be to **assist, service** and **support** rural development initiatives.

Development Principles

Rural community development programs must have some basic principles as guidelines to ensure the "common good" is recognized in all efforts to improve community life. Again, based on what Islanders told the Rural Development board during the planning stages of this Strategy, the principles outlined below are basic to any rural development in Prince Edward Island.

1. Development Must be Carried out in Harmony with the Environment

This is a very broad principle which relates to land use practices, activities that may pollute air, water or soil and to unsound practices which may deplete resources. This principle is based on the concept of sustainable development, as advanced by **Our Common Future, 1987, The World Commission on Environment and Development (The Brundtland Report)**. It has as its underlying premise the belief that carefully planned development can be carried out on a socially and environmentally sustainable basis. Throughout the public participation to this Strategy, many groups made reference to the importance of preserving our natural environment. Government too has made its position

clear on the environment, and recommendations from the Prince Edward Island Conservation Strategy and the Report of the Royal Commission on the Land will be integral to this Rural Development Strategy. The simple truth is that if resource practices are not sustainable then rural communities are not sustainable.

2. **Community Based Participation Will be Encouraged as a Means of Rural Development**

It is obvious that the initiative for rural development cannot be left solely to market forces or to government. Citizen organizations have demonstrated their interest in and ability to foster local development. Local organizations represent the rural people who have made a commitment to stay and live in the community. Only by encouraging these organizations will rural areas develop their own economies and satisfy their own needs for security and services.

3. **Development Must be Appropriate to the Island and Build on Existing Strengths**

Prince Edward Island is fortunate in having a long established culture and history on which to build. In addition to its natural beauty, relatively clean environment, rural character, and excellent image, the inherent personal strengths and abilities of the people of

Prince Edward Island offer much "home grown" potential for rural development. Inherent in this principle is the awareness of natural strengths and the care that is necessary to ensure that these very strengths are not compromised or destroyed through inappropriate development.

4. **Development Must be Responsible to the Vision and Direction set out in the Rural Development Strategy**

Every project in rural development throughout the province is an important building block in the kind of rural Prince Edward Island we hope to have. Only through a unified agreement on basic objectives can the sort of Island we desire evolve. The role of the strategy is to focus government's policy attentions on rural Prince Edward Island, ensuring that the maximum latitude for local development is maintained while, at the same time, retaining an Island-wide consideration for common objectives and goals.

C. POLICY AND PROGRAM REVIEW

With rare exception, the activities of every department and agency of government impinge on rural Prince Edward Island, yet the effect of present policies and programs on the rural development process is not well understood. In its role as a Committee of Cabinet, the Rural Development Board will carry out

a special review of existing government programs and policies. This will be done on a department-by-department basis over the next two years. In addition to determining the efficacy of existing programs, the Board will make recommendations on how programs might be altered to have a more positive effect on rural development, as well as make recommendations on new policy and program ideas.

Areas of government activity that have obvious implications for rural P.E.I., and thus will be considered first include:

- rural housing
- transportation system
- tourism industry
- value added production and community based enterprises
- primary resource sectors (agriculture, fishing, forestry)
- industrial development
- culture and heritage
- community recreation
- education
- land use and ownership
- environmental protection

Upon completion of the review, the Rural Development Board will prepare an integrated overview and evaluation of government's approach to rural development to be presented to Cabinet for its consideration and action. Beyond that point, the

Rural Development Board's role in the annual Strategic Overview Process will ensure that consideration of the implications for rural development is an ongoing activity of government.

D. REORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT

In order to better fulfill its role and to fully acknowledge the scope of the task before us, the Government of Prince Edward Island will undertake a major redirection of its resources.

A new Department of Community Development will be created, integrating the present Department of Community and Cultural Affairs with other service and extension areas of government to form an effective lead agency. The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs is acknowledged now as having the rural development mandate, and the majority of its present function is rural community oriented. It is a natural evolution for this line department to assume an even stronger mandate for secondary and tertiary economic development in rural Prince Edward Island, in addition to its present responsibilities for land use management, development services, community planning, municipal relations, libraries and information services, and cultural preservation and enhancement.

All departments and agencies of government must share the task of reinforcing and assisting rural communities, however, the Rural Development Strategy needs to be galvanized around a properly mandated and resource supplied lead agency. This is essential if government wishes to contend in a serious way with the trends discussed earlier.

The Rural Development Board will retain its role as a reviewing and coordinating central agency, giving policy direction to all departments and agencies on the implementation and operation of the strategy.

The Chairman of the Rural Development Board will continue to be the Minister of Community Development.

Administrative support to the Board will be provided by a Rural Development Analyst working in Executive Council Office. This will eliminate the current confusion which has resulted from having staff of a line department (Community and Cultural Affairs) also serve a central agency function.

E. DECENTRALIZATION OF GOVERNMENT

In recent years certain components of government administration have been successfully relocated to communities outside the Charlottetown area, creating employment opportunities in these communities and distributing more equitably the economic benefits that come from modern public administration.

Government will continue this decentralization wherever possible as a direct tool of rural development. It should not conclude that a decentralized public administration necessarily is an inefficient one, for the availability of modern telecommunications and the smallness of the Island itself make such decentralization a practical alternative. Moreover, from a management perspective the virtues of a decentralized, delegated system are well known.

F. A MODEL FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY

It is important to understand and outline explicitly the structure and process that government will use to respond to rural development initiatives. In this section the model under which the newly formed Department of Community Development will operate is defined and outlined.

As noted earlier, existing infrastructure and the intimacy of geography in Prince Edward Island naturally give this province many of the essential characteristics necessary to the "micropolitan approach" to rural development. A key element is the existing network of Regional Services Centres which ensure that all Islanders are within easy access of government services. Under the Rural Development Strategy, these Regional Services Centre areas will be utilized as the basis for program delivery.

The principal mechanism for assisting communities in rural development projects will be Regional Rural Development Task Teams. These teams will be given directions to:

1. **Respond to community initiatives**
2. **Coordinate government resources in the region**
3. **Assist in community development planning**

The Regional Rural Development Task Teams will be comprised of existing Regional Services Centre staff who are part of the extension effort of the various departments. Their present roles will be modified and/or adjusted so that they can:

- **provide assistance to project development**
- **develop and implement regional approaches to rural development**
- **ensure that the needs of the rural area are adequately reflected in departmental policy and programming**

To achieve the above, under the direction of department heads, task teams will be formed with a mission to work cooperatively on a regional basis. Methods will be identified to integrate the team activity into departmental implementation programs. It is recommended that all department goals have a regional breakdown and that annual reports be structured to provide information on regional department activity. Further, it is recommended that the Rural Development Board have a presentation from each region annually to report on rural development activities in the region and that the Rural Development Board meet at least annually with task teams from each region.

Rural Development Task Teams will be structured in the following manner:

- they will be formed by the Chairman of the Rural Development Board;

- guidelines will be prepared to establish the responsibilities and procedures of the task teams;

- the Department of Community Development Regional Development Coordinator will act as Executive Secretary to the task team;

- the Chairman, rotated annually, will be appointed by the Chairman of the Rural Development Board;

- there will be permanent and ex-officio members of the task teams depending on activity, projects under way and the regional availability of staff;

- where appropriate, members from federal government departments may be asked to sit as ex-officio members of the task team;

- staff from the Planning Section of the Department of Community Development will be regionally assigned to support task team members and will attend regular task meetings;

- the Planning Section will develop a planning model which will put activities into perspective and lead ultimately to the development of a regional plan;

- Community Advisory Boards to the Regional Services Centres will continue in their vital communications and liaison role, reflecting the interests of the regional community. The Advisory Boards will be the consultative committee to the Rural Development Task Teams in each region;

- to ensure that the system works and that region employees recognize the strong commitment that government has to the process, a middle management committee from concerned departments will be convened by the Executive Director of Rural Development, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs. This Committee will have responsibility for an annual assessment and evaluation of the process.

The activities of the Rural Development Task Teams will be based on a three-pronged approach.

First, the principal function of the teams will be to respond to community development initiatives. The teams will assist in the development of projects they become aware of as a function of their regular line department responsibilities; on projects that are identified by government as being high priority; on projects which emanate from local communities within the region; and on projects which are jointly explored and developed by the team and a community organization.

Second, the task teams will focus on community organizations as the basis for identifying and addressing local community needs. In this regard the Rural Development Task Teams will make efforts to strengthen local organizations through leadership development, information resources, seed capital funding, etc. Through this process, teams will also assist the community in

regional planning, aimed ultimately at achieving a regional consensus of what should be done and how it should be carried out.

Third, the task teams will have an internal integrating function. Members of the Rural Development Task Teams will view their normal line department functions within a regional development framework, a broadened scope from that which presently exists. Over time, work will be redefined to be regional rather than sector or departmental oriented. **In effect, staff will be viewed as rural extensions workers, and it is hoped that, over time, narrow departmental boundaries will be broken down and staff will become -- not generalists, but specialists working in the general area of rural development.** A Recreation Coordinator, for example, will continue to be a specialist in that particular area, but will more critically assess the role of recreation and recreation facilities in the process of community and regional development.

G. BEGINNING INITIATIVES

There is a need to take visible steps to promote the rural development process and to encourage volunteers with early successes in managing community improvement projects. A **Community Action Program** with several components to ensure it can address a broad range of development needs will be offered. It

will especially address those needs identified in presentations made to the Rural Development Board. Generally, this approach will assist development through community planning support directed both to overall community improvement and also to specific initiatives. By assisting with planning, government will perform a support role while the community is the actual initiator/implementor. Projects will also receive seed capital funding and assistance in preparing applications to other federal and provincial programs. Several components of the Community Action Program are outlined as examples of how government and community will work together to improve rural conditions.

1. Community Pride

In rural communities across the Province organizations express a desire to be directly involved in local improvements. Some communities are well organized and already have project ideas, as well as capable groups eager to implement them. Other communities have a strong will to act but do not have the experience or planning necessary to identify and implement projects. In both instances seed funds to enable projects to get underway are needed.

One excellent example of this development approach is rural hamlet enhancement.

Throughout the Island there are many smaller communities where a convenience store, gas station, post office, or other valuable community service has established. Often we see a mix of older and newer homes in close proximity which indicates that the location is a kind of focus in the life of the community. The community attitude and pride displayed by residents in these hamlets is often accepted by visitors as representing the character of the whole area. It is also very likely that when properties in the hamlet are well maintained, others in the community are encouraged.

The community pride component will provide planning and seed capital support for such local improvements.

2. Community Heritage Development

Prince Edward Island possesses a rich and distinctive heritage, much of which has been recorded, preserved and recreated in the form of genealogical "family trees", local written histories, artifact collections, and historic sites and buildings. This heritage resource is of great cultural and educational value to Islanders, and of growing interest to visitors. Indeed, the Island's cultural heritage now provides the themes for provincial tourism promotional campaigns.

Many community organizations have taken on projects to restore historic properties or to create local museums. To address financing problems, a tourism dimension frequently is built into the project. A property is restored for heritage purposes but also incorporates sound revenue generating aspects to ensure the site can be maintained. Such projects create much-needed employment and can be economically viable.

The community heritage development component will offer seed capital grants and encourage other sources of funds to implement projects.

3. Community Crafts Development

The crafts industry offers major development opportunities for rural communities.

On Prince Edward Island there are over 100 craft sales outlets. About 30% of sales (especially Christmas gifts) are to residents and the balance to tourists. These outlets report that consistent supply of quality crafts is a problem and that a doubling of production could easily be accommodated. Experience at regional, national, and international trade shows, where buyers from chain stores place orders for crafts, indicates an

excellent market opportunity. Unfortunately, only a small number of our craft producers are capable or interested in wholesaling in quantity.

The key to craft sales is that products must show originality and quality. To address the export market a willingness to produce in quantities to satisfy markets is also necessary.

Government intends to work in partnership with the community to further develop the crafts industry in rural areas. The P.E.I. Craft Council, Holland College, and regional craft organizations will be consulted regarding appropriate skill development and education in the crafts area. Efforts will be made to create a better awareness of the opportunities that exist in crafts. Pilot demonstration projects also will be undertaken in various communities to provide workable craft industry development models. These initiatives have the potential of providing many jobs in rural communities.

4. Community Information Service

The electronic revolution of the past twenty years has been pervasive in society, and on Prince Edward Island the satellite receiving dish, facsimile machine, microcomputer and other

information technologies have found their way into both home and business.

Indeed, the age of the "electronic cottage" is now in sight, and it will be increasingly easier for local businesses and community organizations to exchange information of all kinds with correspondents provincially, nationally, and even world wide. This certainly will give a new complexion to rural life, and afford it new competitive opportunities.

Government will assist this process by establishing a regional network of sophisticated information facilities to serve rural Prince Edward Island. Building on the existing Regional Services Centres, and utilizing the latest information technologies, these facilities will become an important new resource for rural development.

VIII CONCLUSION

In presenting this Rural Development Strategy, we have outlined a rural-urban dilemma that is shared with the rest of North America. However, because of Prince Edward Island's relatively small size we face a particularly threatening situation should present trends continue unabated.

In preparing this Strategy we have utilized information from a variety of sources and combined it with responses from the rural residents of Prince Edward Island through their local community organizations to develop a vision for rural Prince Edward Island. It is a vision that thoughtfully links primary, secondary and tertiary economic development with a well trained and progressive workforce, a vision with community responsibility and conscience. This economic development, however, is but a means to an end, the end being a decentralized Island society in which rural communities are socially, economically and environmentally captivating.

We have outlined the role government will play in trying to realize this vision and have presented in some detail the major steps that have been developed to ensure that government is responsive to the rural community.

The approach is definitely community based. Rural development is rarely, if ever, successful unless the impetus is local. Government will foster, assist and service, but without community initiation, responsibility and commitment the kind of Prince Edward Island we want will never come to fruition. Self-reliance, local proprietorship and a minimal dependence on outside interests is the key to a strong, proud and progressive rural countryside.

In conclusion, it must be reiterated that Prince Edward Island is not alone in its struggle to maintain vital rural communities. Since work commenced on this Strategy, a special Federal-Provincial Committee on Rural Development has completed its report, and the OECD Secretariat has examined the global aspects of rural development. It is comforting to know perhaps that both studies confirm the philosophy and approach taken in this document. In fact, rural community development represents an area of public policy in which Prince Edward Island can lead the country and possibly the world, showing creativity, insight and wisdom.